



PCT Hiker Lost

March 30, 2017
Fuller Ridge Trail
2017-017

Written by Corey Ellison

Thursday morning around 10:30am law enforcement received an emergency call for a stuck Pacific Crest Trail) PCT through hiker near Black Mountain Campground. Subject stated he had fallen down the mountain and could not self-extricate and needed assistance. Riverside Sheriff's Helicopter Star 9 and CHP aviation were both able to locate subject, but were unable to land due to adverse weather conditions (High Winds and Clouds). RMRU was activated at approximately noon to hike into the subject.

RMRU personnel arrived at intersection of State Highway 243 and Black Mountain Road and met with a Riverside County Sheriff's Deputy at 2pm. Weather reports showed clear skies with high winds. Information from the Sheriff informed RMRU that subject was suffering from chest pain/shortness of breath. Due to the assumed location of subject (North facing mountain side), mountaineering axes/crampons/helmets were taken along with the other basic rescue gear.

From highway 243 we took vehicles with 4WD and enough ground clearance began the approximately 8 mile drive up a non-maintained dirt road to the Fuller Ridge trail head closest to the provided GPS coordinates from aviation.



**RMRU Truck can go no further
Photo by Gary Farris.**

Approximately 3 miles from the trail head adverse weather and poor road conditions prevented any further use of motorized vehicles. Team one (Tony, Gary, Tyler, and Corey) were assigned to continue by foot to subject while the remaining members worked to free the stuck vehicle and shuttle rest of the arriving team members to that point in case team one needed additional man power.

Team one took the road to trail head and arrived at trail-head approximately 5:30pm. Subjects last know coordinates were believed to be 1.5-2 miles East on the North slope along the trail. Progress began to slow about .75 miles down the trail due to post-holing and steep icy slopes.



**Corey Heading up with Crampons, Ice Axe, and Helmet
Photo by Tyler Shumway.**

Team members stopped to put on crampons and helmets before continuing. At 6:30pm new information from base informed team one that subject had made his way up the slope to trail and would be inside of a blue tent. At approximately 7pm Team one contacted the subject on the trail about half a mile closer than subjects last known coordinates.



**Gary Hiking up in Wind and Clouds, Fuller Ridge Trail
Photo by Tyler Shumway.**

Subject was a 33-year-old male who was hiking PCT when he found himself inadequately prepared for conditions. Subject stated he had lost all his water and stove when falling down slopes and had exhausted himself climbing back to the trail repeatedly. Primary and secondary medical assessments were performed and found the subject to be medically sound. Subject stated the call operator had misinterpreted his statements, he was out of breath from climbing up slopes after falling down them, not for any medical reason. Subject denied difficulty breathing and chest pain upon RMRU arrival.



**Tony happy they are with the Subject
Photo by Gary Farris.**



**Cory, Subject, and Tyler Ready to Go
Photo by Gary Farris.**

Subject stated he was ready to walk out with assistance. Subject's main problem was lack of traction devices for his feet, as he was only wearing trail-runners which were inadequate for icy conditions. Subject was also thirsty and cold after losing water and attempting to melt snow in a clear zip-lock bag with his body heat. Subject was provided water, insulating layers, and micro-spikes by RMRU personnel. Team one began to return to base on foot with subject. Subject was able to move under his own power. Base was notified that they were heading back to the rescue truck.



(Tony, Gary, Subject, and Corey-Orange Helmet) Hiking Out
Photo by Tyler Shumway.

It got dark on the way back to base and everyone put on a headlamp due to decreased visibility. We reached base at 8:30pm. Subject was driven down to highway 243 in the RMRU vehicle. The Sheriff's deputy obtained a report from subject. The subject was able to obtain a ride to Cabazon from base at highway 243. RMRU then debriefed the mission and all team members started home at 9:30pm.

RMRU Members Involved: Cameron Dickinson, Corey Ellison, Gary Farris, Michael George, Glenn Henderson, Tony Hughes, Matt Jordon, Shani Pynn, and Tyler Shumway.

RMRU is a volunteer search and rescue team that covers Riverside County and assists other teams with search and rescue efforts in other counties. Each member purchases their own equipment and takes time off work, without compensation, to participate in search and rescue missions. Team equipment is purchased from contributions from the community. We are a non-profit organization and are funded by [donations](#) from people like you.